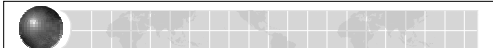
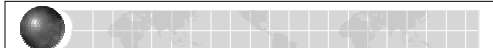
 ***Web Design
Tips and Techniques***
Spring 2003 FDI
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What is Web Design?

- Web design is the process of collecting and organizing information for presentation on the web.



What is Web Design?

- Broadly speaking, the creation of web pages and images is a large part of web design; however, this creation process will include a number of important decisions regarding your audience, your site's goals your site's performance, as well as aesthetics, layout, etc.
- This lecture will provide the key information that will help you make these choices intelligently.



Before you really get to work...

- Visit other web sites with an eye toward what works well and what doesn't.
- Visit web pages in your discipline.
- Visit web pages that have similar goals (i.e., if you're working on a course web site, visit other course web sites - especially similar courses).



Your First Steps

- Identify your target audience
- Have a statement of purpose
- Know your main objectives
- Have a concise outline of the information your site will contain.



Audience

- A determination of your target audience will greatly influence how you build your web site. Can you tell (guess)...
 - the speed of their internet connection?
 - the age of their computers?
 - the size of their monitors?
 - which fonts are on their computers?
- Lets discuss these in terms of the audiences we're likely to encounter...

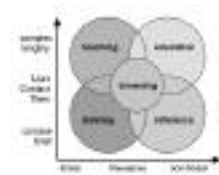


Virginia Tech Audiences

- Freshman
- On-campus versus Off-campus
- Graduate Students
- Non-Traditional Students
- Other Virginia Tech Faculty
- Colleagues at Other Institutions
- General Public



Broad Design Strategies...



...in light of these:

- Audience
- Purpose
- Objectives



Broad Design Strategies

- Make your pages/site user-centered.
- Create an easy-to-use navigational structure.
- Build an efficient hierarchy of information.
- Avoid dead-end pages.
- Make it scalable (<http://www.fll.vt.edu>)



General Facts about All Users

Studies have shown...

- that, for computing tasks, the threshold of frustration for users is approx. 10 seconds.
- that users prefer menus that present a minimum of five to seven links
- users prefer a few dense screens of choices over many layers of simplified menus.
- not impressed with complexity that seems gratuitous (<http://www.auslander.net/>).



Now that We've Considered the Broader Issues...

...let's consider the web page and site:

- Aesthetics and Visual Identity
- Organization and Navigation
- Tables and Frames
- Other Issues and Testing



Aesthetics and Visual Identity

- Keep color choices simple and coordinated
- Too much color is distracting
- When choosing background color and text color, be sure they are in sharp contrast to one another.
- Avoid dark backgrounds with light text (printing difficulty for students)



Aesthetics and Visual Identity

- Consider using the same color choices on all pages. This will give your site a visual identity (<http://www.fl.vt.edu/eddie>).
- Consider audience when choosing the size of your images and graphics.
- Avoid Clipart.



Aesthetics: Text Formatting

- Wide columns are hard to read.
- Very narrow columns are hard to read.
- Centered text is hard to read.
- Right aligned text is hard to read.
- Avoid using all CAPS.



Aesthetics: Graphics

- Use graphics efficiently.
- Too many graphics or large graphics increase the download time.
- 100% Web Ready Graphic Formats:
 - **GIF** - 256 colors supported -small size
 - **JPG** - millions of colors supported - compressed



Examples of Aesthetic Considerations

- Good Ones
 - <http://www.ext.vt.edu/>
 - <http://www.history.uiuc.edu/>
- Bad Ones
 - <http://www.geocities.com/markangyl/Vampire.html>
 - <http://www.cs.virginia.edu/brochure/classics.html>



Organization and Navigation

- Include Contact Information (<http://www.fill.vt.edu/contact.html>)
- Consider an extensive table of contents, sometimes called "site map." (<http://www.sasinschool.com/global/pages/sitemap.shtml>)
- Consider building navigation into your web site (ex., "home" button on all pages).
- You may want to avoid listing date information in this format: 4/3/01



Navigation Examples

- Good Ones
 - <http://www.fill.vt.edu/>
 - <http://www.fdi.vt.edu/>
- Bad Ones
 - <http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/knatty/>
 - <http://www.colorado.edu/AmStudies/lewis/2010/home.htm>
 - <http://atlantic.evsc.virginia.edu/%7Ealm7d/pirch/>



Tables and Frames

- All table data must download before it is displayed, so break up long tables.
- Very old browsers don't support tables.
- Correctly used, frames can offer a persistent aesthetic and/or navigational aids to a site
- Incorrectly used, frames will bring up other web pages in misleading ways.



Frames Examples

- Good Ones
 - <http://www.music.vt.edu/musicdictionary/>
 - <http://www.fl.vt.edu/Spanish/>
- Bad Ones
 - <http://www.engl.virginia.edu/>
(click on web courses, then ENWR 110)



Other Issues

- Consistency
- Spell Check
- Copyright issues
 - <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/copyright/>
- Your server size and limitations
- Web Accessibility...



Web Accessibility

- Spring 2000 Survey of Students with Disabilities:
<http://www.edtech.vt.edu/edtech/accessible/IT/vt/survey.htm>
- Items to incorporate into our design now:
 - Alt-tags
 - Well-chosen language for links
 - Consistently structured pages
 - Use of contrasting colors
- Is simple design the best?



Testing

- Test all of the links on your site, especially if you have external links.
- Test with different browsers.
- Test on other platforms.
- Test your download times.
